

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The 15-member Economic Development Advisory Council, established in 2009, represents a broad-based group of Milford citizens and business owners working to strengthen and retain the existing business and commercial base in Town and encourage opportunities for new economic growth. The Council was given the charge by the Board of Selectmen to:

“...develop and recommend economic development policy in accordance with the goals of the Milford Board of Selectmen and Milford Master Plan, and utilizing the report Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford dated June 8, 2009, facilitate the economic development goals, recommendations, and actions at the direction of the Board of Selectmen.”

EDAC develops its annual goals and projects from economic development objectives identified in the 2009 ***Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford, Report to the Milford Board of Selectmen and Planning Board***. This past year EDAC wrapped up an ongoing cooperative effort with the Office of Community Development on customer service to determine what processes and procedures were working and where improvements could be implemented. A report was presented to the Board of Selectmen in late May and results from the group’s work were generally very positive from the development community. Several improvements were identified which the Office felt could be incorporated into its operations.

EDAC members felt that it was critical to get a sense from the community at large what residents and business owners thought future economic development policies and actions should be to insure prosperity into the next decade. With that in mind an “Economic Development Community Input Survey” was developed and widely distributed during the summer and fall. A final analysis will be drafted and available in early 2014, but an early theme from the respondents was that there should be growth and development, but ‘small in scale’ and consistent with Milford’s small town character. The EDAC survey will form a foundation for further recommendations to be made to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.

Working to achieve a unified and consistent Town-wide economic development philosophy that is shared between citizens, elected officials, volunteer boards and commissions, and town government has been a goal since its founding. During 2013 two significant work sessions were held between the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and EDAC. These work sessions resulted in a good and respectful exchange of ideas and priorities. The three groups reached a consensus that “We have to invest in the Town while building respect for current residents and businesses concurrently while attracting new business and people.” There was agreement that economic development requires teamwork and leadership between all stakeholders, that investment in infrastructure was the overall #1 priority for economic development, and that public trust must be built and maintained to support infrastructure costs, and that there must be a consistent vision and message sent to the public and development community.

The Council works closely with the Community Development Office which regularly provided updates on development occurring and pending throughout Town as well as all administrative assistance.

In 2013 EDAC continued to proactively support development projects that will provide positive economic development benefit to the Town, such as the Pine Valley Mill Affordable Housing project, the proposed commercial rezoning off South Street, the proposed Ecotech Development acquisition of the former police station and the tax increment financing district properties, and initiatives of the Milford Improvement Team (MIT). Building communication, resources, and cooperation between existing businesses and the Town as well as building a strong diversified local economy for the future is the mission of the Economic Development Advisory Council. If at any time additional information is needed, please contact Bill Parker, Community Development Director at 249-0620 or at <http://www.milford.nh.gov/town/boards-committees-and-commissions/community-development/economic-development-advisory-council> or any EDAC member.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Ciardelli, Chairman, Economic Development Advisory Council